DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 448 500 EA 030 759

TITLE	School Matters: Mapping for Reflecting and Planning.
INSTITUTION	Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Lab. at Brown Univ., Providence, RI.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	7p.
CONTRACT	RJ96006401
AVAILABLE FROM	LAB at Brown University, The Education Alliance, 222 Richmond Street, Suite 300, Providence, RI 02903-4226. Tel: 800-521-9550 (Toll Free).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Cognitive Mapping; Educational History; Educational Planning; Elementary Secondary Education; *Long Range Planning; Participative Decision Making; Strategic Planning

ABSTRACT

This report describes how schools can draw on multiple voices to create a comprehensive portrait of important events in a school's history. In this "mapping" process, participants create a map that portrays the collective history of the school, facilitating an increased awareness of past actions and their connection to current conditions. Participants include teachers, administrators, parents, support staff, district staff, and community members who know the history of the school but who may have different perspective on that history. The document outlines what materials are needed and offers an overview of how schools have used the mapping process, such as site-based management teams' identification of priorities and schoolwide long-range planning. The process is described in two stages. Stage 1 introduces the concept and offers tips for guiding the discussion and encouraging participants to share their personal information. Stage 2 asks participants to relay what they see emerging from the map, such as any patterns or trends, and asks participants to share the implications of the emerging history. The document suggests some discussion topics (contexts to maintain, organization, and teaching and learning) and offers tips on room set-up and organizing the group. (RJM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 448 500

EI

SCHOOL MATTERS

MAPPING FOR REFLECTING AND PLANNING

The Mapping Process engages multiple voices in creating a comprehensive portrait of important events in a school's history. The map you create is a collective history that increases awareness of past actions and their connection to current conditions. It is a picture of where activities and programs have and have not been directed in the past. A map can be used to identify and reflect on patterns or themes which may include successful changes made in the past. Once you take stock of past reality and identify new priorities and needs, as well as where new strategies are needed, you can develop plans for future improvement or reform efforts.

Mapping is a two-stage process that uses the collective knowledge of multiple stakeholders in the school community to capture major events in the school's history. In the first stage, events are depicted on a large wall chart so that participants have access to the same information. In the second stage, the group analyzes the patterns visible on the wall chart so that all participants engage in creating a common understanding of the critical events and long-term patterns in school life that lie behind school programs and activities.

Participants include teachers, administrators, parents, support staff, district staff and community members who know the history of the school but may have different perspectives on that history, as well as representatives of those groups who could benefit by learning about the school, its history, and its programs.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

LAB
Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University
RMC Research

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EA 030 157

PREPARATION

Map Set-Up

Participants

10-15 Participants: Involve a variety of school staff, administration, parents, business and community partners, district staff, school board members, and other key persons. In deciding who to involve, try to capture the history of school reform, over time, from a variety of experiences and perspectives. An alternative is to conduct several mapping discussions with different groups and compare results.

2 Facilitators: These can be either external individuals or internal staff members. The facilitators should be familiar with the general background of the school's history and should encourage the presentation of multiple viewpoints. One facilitator will guide the mapping discussion and the other will manage the mapping, taking notes on post-its.

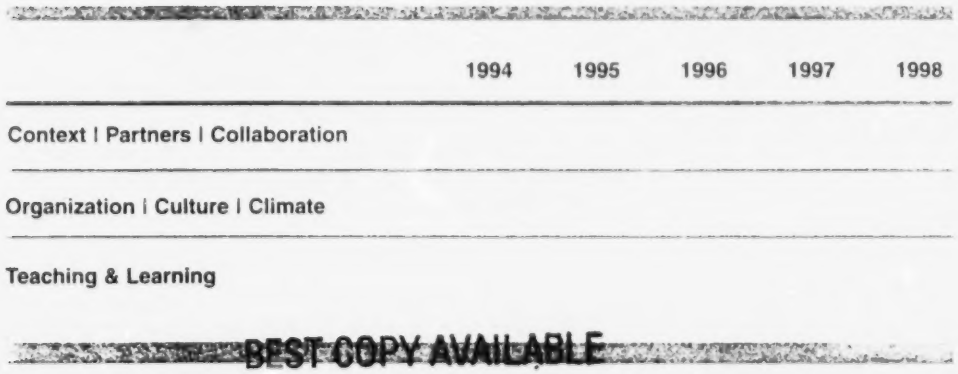
Materials Needed for Mapping Process

White poster paper (3' X 6' in size), ink markers, post-it notes (preferably 3" X 5" size), masking tape, name tags (if external facilitator is used), adequate wall space, handout (see *Discussion Topics*).

Room Set-Up

Post white poster paper along a wall so that the facilitators have easy access to all participants in the mapping session and have a clear view.

Draw three parallel lines horizontally across the poster paper. Label each line to represent three main areas of discussion concerning the school's history and reforms (see *Discussion Topics*). In Step 3 of *Stage 1* of the Mapping Process (see illustration at bottom of this page), a timeline will be added across the top of the poster so that information can be placed in chronological order.



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

STAGE 1 of MAPPING PROCESS

Creating the Collective History

STEP 1 Overview of Mapping Process (10 minutes)

Introduce the purpose of the mapping process and how the resulting information will be used. Explain the roles of each facilitator. Remind participants that they will discuss and plot the key events/elements of their school reform process on the map.

STEP 2 Introduction of Participants (15 minutes)

Have participants share their personal information: names, titles/roles in the school, number of years in the school, and *one* highlight of their role/involvement in the school change process. The introductions give the facilitators information about each participant's role and length of time at the school and require everyone to immediately engage in the discussion of school change.

STEP 3 Mapping Discussion (60 minutes)

Develop the timeline by asking those with long-term association when the school's reform efforts began and mark the starting date through to the present date.

Distribute the *Discussion Topics* handout, which provides suggested areas for the discussion. Choose fewer or more horizontal lines on your map depending on how you wish to organize the school history discussion. Have participants jot down ideas (see *Discussion Topics*).

Ask each participant for ONE item on his/her list, and then open up the discussion for anyone to offer ideas. Write abbreviations of responses on post-it notes and place these on the map along the horizontal lines.

Ensure that the facilitators remain neutral. They should capture the discussion on post-it notes using the participants' language/ word choices, while being as brief as possible. If participants dwell on one particular element of school history or focus on a particular year, it may be necessary for the facilitators to ask about other topics or about key events in a particular year.

Point out the gaps on the timeline and probe for more information. Keep the discussion flowing, soliciting information from each of the participants, so that no one monopolizes the conversation.

Each school is unique, therefore each school will develop a unique pattern for its history.

At the end of Step 3, the result is a map with post-it notes placed in relation to both horizontal lines that identify main areas of discussion and to the timeline at the top of the map.

1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Accelerated Schools info.	Accelerated Schools training	School-based mgmt. begins	Began business partnerships	TQM training by business partner
School climate team formed	Lead teachers mentoring	Teacher teams formed	School-based mgmt. piloting	Inquiry process implemented
Pre-School/ Early Childhood program	Chose school reform effort to build capacity	Whole language curricula	Implement new instructional methods	Redesign curricula

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

STAGE 2 of MAPPING PROCESS

Analyzing and Interpreting the Map (approximately 2 hours)

Now begins the critical stage of making meaning of the information on the map. We suggest a three-step process of reflection by a group of individuals knowledgeable about the school history and invested in assessing its meaning.

STEP 1
What do you see?
Discuss your observations about the history depicted and take notes on those observations.

Look for

- critical events that move reform forward or stifle development
- starting points for new ways of thinking and operating
- emphases at different points in time
- times of great activity, high energy, and/or turmoil
- times when little change seems to happen
- gaps in attention to major areas of functioning (e.g., professional development, curriculum, climate innovations)

STEP 2
What are the patterns and trends?
Use the information to discuss patterns that describe the history.

Look for

- shifts in the focus of energy and attention over time
- the nature of catalyzing events or activities that caused other changes
- the seeming prerequisites for change and development
- the rhythm or phases of change that characterize the history
- roles of different stakeholder groups (e.g., parents, teachers, administration, students)
- influence of external forces (e.g., district requirements, state funding, persistent obstacles or barriers)
- key supports
- themes that galvanized attention (e.g., literacy, empowerment of staff, parent involvement)
- periods of planning and review/evaluation/assessment
- characteristics of changes that take hold and move beyond a small core group of initiators
- activities or events that facilitate the development of new relationships or new interactions among people

At this point you may want to produce a new map that synthesizes observations and patterns. We refer to these as analytic maps because they represent an attempt to derive meaning from the raw data while retaining the historical context. An analytic map is a helpful tool to use in communicating the school's history because the raw data map may simply be too confusing for those who were not part of all the changes. Consider these possibilities for organizing an analytic map: content themes, cycles of intensity of activity, phases of development, key events or major shifts (see example of analytical map below).

STEP 3
What are the implications of the history? Consider your analysis of patterns for the issues and opportunities at hand. There are many directions the discussion can take (e.g., developing a long-range plan, designing professional development, conducting a self-assessment, brainstorming improvement strategies). The idea is to use the analysis of patterns to guide and ground your thinking about future options.

Keep in mind

- how different groups of students have been affected
- what gaps need to be addressed
- what pace of change is tolerable
- how structural changes and curricular changes are related
- how changes in context affect the organization
- what you have learned about overcoming barriers to change
- who have been your allies in reform

Sample Analytical Map

1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Preparation for reform	Putting structure into place to begin reform	Deeper structural development in schools/classrooms	Change in ways of doing business externally and internally Taking control of resources	Consolidation of resources Future planning

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

HOW SCHOOLS HAVE USED THE MAPPING PROCESS

Site-based Management Team Identification of Priorities

The new site-based management team at P.S. 952 spent an afternoon mapping the history of their school. They invited former members of the team and knowledgeable members of the wider school community to participate, and with the help of two external facilitators, created a map of the past five years of the school's history. Their purpose was to orient new members of the team and to identify priorities for the coming year. The participants arrived at multiple conclusions from the patterns they saw on their map.

They noticed that over the years there had been periods when multiple programs and activities were initiated followed by years in which virtually nothing new happened. Discussion indicated that the latter seemed to be years of consolidation. The team agreed to ask some additional questions to see if the past year, when little seemed to have been initiated, was a consolidation year, and then talk about implications for what they could initiate this year. They realized there had been little effort at community and parent involvement over the past several years. The newly forming team will investigate parent involvement this year. Their analysis of the patterns on the map suggested that intensive professional development in reading had led to many changes in the school, including the addition of an after-school program and a move to inclusive classrooms and teacher teaming. The team decided to explore whether it would be possible to launch a similar approach in mathematics, an area that had been neglected for a number of years.

Schoolwide Program Long-Range Planning

The David Ellis Elementary school has operated a Title I schoolwide program for the past three years and is now faced with evaluating progress and developing a new five-year schoolwide plan. The schoolwide program planning team held a series of open meetings for members of the school community to participate in review and planning. At the first meeting, the principal facilitated a discussion of the whole group to develop a map of the progress of the schoolwide project over the past three years. A core group then turned the events map into an analytic map that depicted the patterns of change over the period. The analytic map showed the shift the school had made over three years from an inward focus to an outward focus, moving from staff concerns centered primarily at the classroom level to everyone focusing on the outcomes of the whole school and connection to the wider community. The map showed emerging trends of an entrepreneurial spirit in the primary grades, evidenced by innovative pilot activities, new funding sources, and use of community resources. Finally, the map showed continued concern about the performance of some groups of students.

At the second large group meeting, the analytic map was reviewed and those gathered agreed that it was an accurate depiction of the trends they had experienced. The parent association president facilitated a planning discussion in which the analytic map was used as the springboard for brainstorming strategies to enhance student performance, working with the strengths the school staff had developed to address the ongoing concern about the performance among some students. The lively discussion included suggestions for redistributing staff time to provide greater attention to students experiencing academic difficulties, seeking grant support for additional materials for families to use with their children, encouraging more sharing among the primary and upper grades teachers, and partnering with two community organizations to bring stronger literacy approaches into after-school activities. The discussion also uncovered some practices that no longer seemed to be priorities, including a few whole-school activities; the planning group decided to redirect the energy going into those activities.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

DISCUSSION TOPICS

CONTEXT | PARTNERS | COLLABORATION

events, programs, and policies at national/state/city levels

central office decisions/programs/policies

involvement of community and school

partnerships with businesses/community

demographic shifts in the community or school populations

key organizations or individuals outside of school that provide services or support

others

ORGANIZATION | CULTURE | CLIMATE

leadership and decision-making processes, teams, and committees

organization of time, grouping of students, and deployment of staff

ways of interacting among coworkers, and among staff and students

classroom management/organization

professional development opportunities

school planning, evaluation, and research processes

others

TEACHING & LEARNING

curriculum development/implementation

implementation of national/state/local standards

assessment practices

instructional approaches/materials/resources

achievement results and other performance measures

drop-out/transfer rates/attendance levels

others

BEST COPY AVAILABLE